

Drug gangs adapt to the changing times

MON NOV 20 1989

Reed, Darryl

By Harry Harris
The Tribune

Narcotics crime

Smaller in numbers, less flashy, able to use modern technology to their benefit, and more profitable.

And, unfortunately, more violent.

Those are the characteristics of the drug gangs of today, according to Oakland police and other sources familiar with narcotics trafficking in the city.

It's a far cry from major organizations of a few years ago — Felix Mitchell's "The Mob," Mickey Moore's "The Family" and Harvey Whisenton's "Funktown." Each had dozens of associates and followers and was known far and wide.

In fact, it was from the mistakes made by those major dealers and, more recently, Darryl "Little D" Reed and Emanuel Lacy — all of whom are now either in jail or, in Mitchell's case, dead — that most of today's dealers have been prompted to change their style and methods.

Some of today's groups are made up of young men who for the most part used to hold menial jobs in those organizations, police say.

There are still groups scattered throughout the city, according to police, but very few have more than a dozen members, and none have adopted nicknames that can attract attention from unwanted sources like police and the media.

For the most part they are in their late teens or early 20s and are usually related or longtime friends.

They don't value life

It is the young age and lack of maturity that police and others feel is the reason for increased violence.

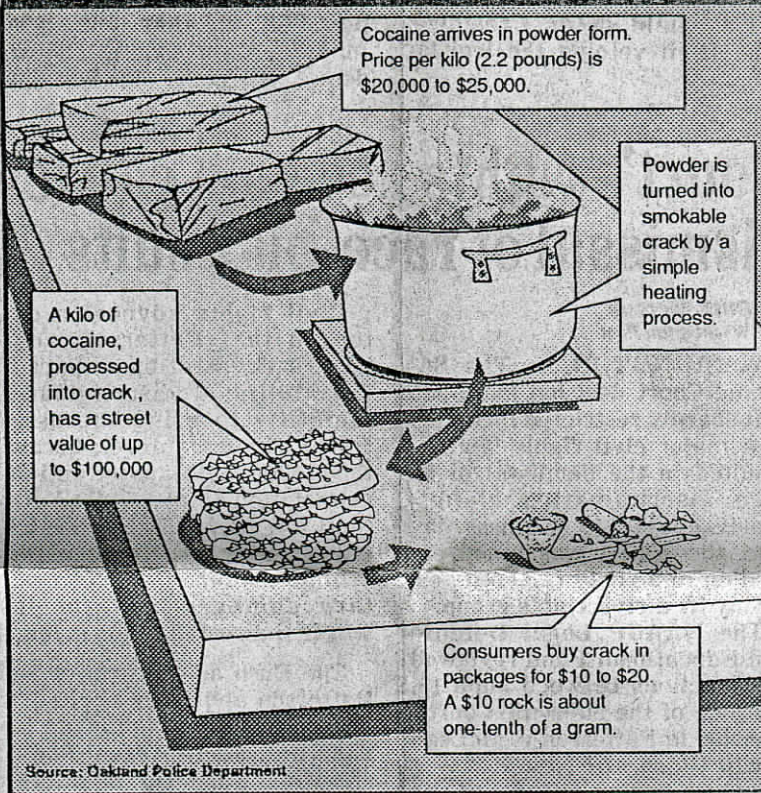
"These kids don't value life and have no real leaders," the lawyer said.

"A lot of it is over money owed and not so much turf," said Ken Scott, a veteran Oakland narcotics officer whose investigations led to the jailing of Moore and Reed.

The Rolls-Royces and Bentleys that were trademarks of their predecessors are not generally the cars of choice for today's dealers.

Many are conducting business in leased or rented cars and on occasion in ratty vehicles that look like they are refugees from a junkyard, just so they won't stand out and can't be traced or seized as assets.

CRACK: A LUCRATIVE BUSINESS



By Steve Kearsley / The Tribune

Their "personal rides" are more likely to be newer foreign cars, customized pickups or refurbished Chevrolets and Mustangs.

Even the layers of jewelry and expensive clothing seem to have been left in the dressers and closets.

What the dope dealer of today has learned is to be more cautious and to ensure that modern technology is being put to uses never envisioned by manufacturers.

Said narcotics Officer Greg Risby: "With the frequency of the arrests, they're getting more wise on how to evade."

Beepers, mobile phones

The newest tools in the dope dealers' trade are electronic pagers, mobile telephones and even voice mail, technology that is making it harder to arrest dealers, police say.

"The big thing is the beeper," said Scott. "It's given everyone more freedom to move around."

Before, when people wanted to buy a large amount of drugs, they usually could go to a certain place and find it. That made it easier for police to locate major suppliers.

Scott said smaller dealers had a supplier's "home phone" and a location where he was

going to be." Police "could sit on that and move with them."

But with beepers and mobile phones, a call is made for a quantity "and you never know when it's going to come," or where until the last call is made, Scott said. "With beeper tag it could be five minutes or five days."

One thing has not changed: Whoever has the best source for cocaine will make the most money. With the popularity of "rock" cocaine, commonly known as "crack," there is a lot of money to be made.

"That will never change; it will always be the law of the land," said Officer Ken Bachman, a narcotics investigator for 12 years.

The majority of cocaine that is sold in Oakland originates in Colombia or Mexico and is usually bought by major Oakland dealers in Los Angeles.

"There are not that many bringing in 50 or 100 (kilos) at a time" like Reed and Lacy did, says Officer Mike Yoell.

"But there are a lot of guys who can get you five or six (kilos) at a time."

Changing coke to crack

Usually, the cocaine is in powder form when it first arrives in Oakland and is almost immediately "rocked" up for resale as smokable crack, says Scott.

Turning the powder into smokable crack is a relatively simple process that can routinely be done in a house or apartment where "there is a stove and a couple of burners," said Scott.

The combination of the lower prices for kilos of cocaine and the huge demand for crack is making it much more profitable for big dealers, police said.

Bachman and Scott can remember several years ago when a kilo cost between \$45,000 and \$50,000. In recent years the price of a kilo had dropped as low as \$12,000, they said.

The price is currently hovering between \$20,000 and \$25,000 a kilo, a rise police attribute to a cut in supply resulting from recent major seizures and arrests in Los Angeles and the government crackdown in Colombia.

The return on a kilo that is broken down into \$10 "rocks," usually one-tenth of a gram, can be tremendous. And demand is high.

"People are using crack now who years ago wouldn't even snort cocaine," Bachman said.

"Cocaine has crossed over to the middle class," added the lawyer who represents dealers. "Smoking crack is a lot easier for people who were reluctant to stick a needle in their arm for heroin."

Bachman said when he first became a narcotics investigator, there were probably 12,000 heroin users in the city.

"I don't know what to tell you about the number of crack users, but it's substantially more than that."

Besides local users, with BART and other means of transportation, there is "easier access for the suburbanite" to come to Oakland and buy crack, he said.

Even though there is more money to be made today, many dealers seem to be spending it as fast as they make it, another sign of their youth and lack of maturity, police said. "They are not that sophisticated to invest in property or a business or even launder the money," said Sgt. Harry Vaughn.

Most of today's dealers "live for today" he said.

They will take care of their immediate families and splurge on cars, jewelry and fancy clothing.

But for the most part they tend "to keep the cash around for the next batch of dope. If they don't get ripped off or the police don't get it they feel they're lucky."

Cocaine trade takes a dive in Oakland

SAT OCT 28 1989

By Harry Harris
The Tribune

NARCOTICS
CRIME

Reed.
Darryl

Cocaine, both in powder and "rock" form, has become scarce on Oakland streets, according to police and drug dealers alike.

But whether the shortage stems from hoarding, big seizures in other parts of the country or ongoing police enforcement depends on who is talking.

Whatever the reason, police, drug dealers and defense attorneys who represent narcotics traffickers all agree cocaine is hard to find.

The current scarcity and lack of cocaine activity has its effects in law enforcement and other areas.

For example, drug arrests for juveniles in October are running half what they were in the previous two months.

And Oakland Police Special Duty Units that specialized in doing "buy-busts" have had to switch tactics because they say there is none to buy.

"It's drier than the Fourth of July," said one 35-year-old semi-

retired crack dealer who asked to remain anonymous. "The dealers can't make any money."

As a result, Oakland police narcotics officers have been able to concentrate more on heroin investigations. So far in October alone officers have seized over 2,000 grams of heroin compared to the total amount of 273 grams confiscated all of last year.

Some dealers have had to get "real jobs to pay the bills," said another dealer.

Police said crack users have been found to be switching to marijuana to calm their nerves.

Defense attorneys say they have also felt the pinch and some have had to refer their clients to public defenders because their fees are not being paid.

Drug arrests of adults are running about 20 percent lower than usual, said Vice Squad Officer Jack Lundquist, who brings many of the cases to the District

See COCAINE, Back Page

Attorney's Office for charging.

Capt. Al Perrodin of the Youth Services Division said that in August and September a total of 179 juveniles were arrested on drug charges, but so far in October only 37 juvenile drug suspects have been arrested.

Oakland Vice Squad Commander Lt. John Vomacka said police began to notice several weeks ago that there was less cocaine on the streets.

He said it coincided with several major seizures across the country, including the all-time record 21 tons of cocaine worth an estimated \$7 billion found in a Sylmar warehouse in Los Angeles County on Sept. 28.

The Los Angeles area is where many Oakland dealers get their supply. That seizure, along with others before and after in Southern California, Texas, Louisiana and Florida, apparently are having a local impact.

Vomacka said the crackdown by the Colombian government on cocaine cartels is also affecting supply here.

Vomacka said police know there are kilos of cocaine in Oakland but for different reasons it is not being sold.

Sgt. Barney Rivera, who commands one of the special duty units, said not only have they had to temporarily stop their buy-bust program, but "when you do find it you get a \$10 piece for \$20."

Narcotics Officer Mike Yoell said up to 70 percent of recent seizures have turned out to be "bunk" or pieces of wax, soap, even powdered milk and pancake mix that dealers are trying to pass off as rock cocaine.

The last major cocaine seizure in Oakland was Sept. 29 when Officer Greg Risby got six kilos worth up to \$1 million on the street that was stored in hidden compartments at an East Oakland home.

Sgt. Harry Vaughn said some dealers "are sitting on it and some can't get it. When you have some of the major dealers who can't connect you know there is a dent."

Police and others believe some of the cocaine is being hoarded to drive up the price.

Last year a kilo of cocaine could be purchased for as little as \$11,000 in Oakland. Now that price is \$25,000 and climbing, police said. An ounce goes for up to \$1,300, officers said.

Vomacka said major dealers might not be moving their goods

pressure from law enforcement.

One dealer said he believes that hoarding is going on "to get the little man out of the game" and "eliminate a lot of people."

A defense attorney who did not want his name used said he would not be surprised if some dealers are hoarding supplies.

Keeping the drugs off the street to raise prices "is like having money in the bank," he said. "It's not going to go bad."

"I think some of these guys would rather have 20 or 30 kilos stashed somewhere than a new house. It's ready cash but it's better than cash because it's appreciating."

The same attorney said dealers are very aware of new federal laws and tighter sentencing and it has them scared, especially in light of what has happened to major dealers recently.

Since the middle of last year, four major suspected Oakland dealers have either been jailed, charged or convicted, including Rudy Henderson, Emanuel Lacy, Anthony Flowers and Darryl Reed.

The lawyer said the case of Reed, who until his arrest last December was Oakland's biggest cocaine dealer, has had the most impact.

Not only was the 20-year-old Reed, known as "Little D" a major supplier, but because of his age and flair "he had more contact with these youngsters," the lawyer said.

Last month Reed was found guilty in federal court of "cooking up" nearly 30 pounds of crack cocaine which he intended to sell for an estimated \$3 million.

Residents in what used to be so-called drug hotspots have noticed the decreased activity.

"After the task force came through here things have been much calmer," said Brenda Smith who helped organize her 54th Street neighborhood against drug dealing and had her back door kicked in for her efforts.

Police would like to think the scarcity and reduced activity will continue but they are also realistic.

"There are just too many variables," Vomacka said. "We know there are still large amounts of cocaine still coming into the country. It's still there but at least people aren't moving it at this time."

Staff writer Brenda Payton contributed to this report.

Major drug-dealer suspect arrested in pre-dawn raid

By Harry Harris
The Tribune

FRI DEC 9 1988

A man described as Oakland's biggest known cocaine distributor was arrested yesterday morning at an Adams Point apartment by police who said they found him "cooking up" almost 30 pounds of rock cocaine.

It was the biggest haul of "crack" cocaine ever seized in California, police said.

When police broke down the door at 5:30 a.m. to arrest Darryl "Little D" Reed, 20, he had cocaine residue on his hands and was carrying a huge, metal soup pot from the stove to the kitchen sink to wash, police said.

Officers said they also seized 16 pounds of alleged powder cocaine from the Van Buren Avenue apartment.

Police estimated the street value of all the alleged cocaine at \$3 million.

They also seized at least \$60,000 in cash, several handguns and records indicating "hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of sales," throughout the Eastbay and San Francisco, said Oakland Sgt. Harry Vaughn.

Reed is scheduled for arraignment today in U.S. District Court in San Francisco on federal charges of conspiracy to distribute cocaine and possession of cocaine with intent to distribute.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Bob Dondero said if convicted, Reed faces a maximum sentence on each count of life in prison and a \$4 million fine. He is being held

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in San Francisco without bail.

The arrest culminated a three-month investigation of Reed, a continuation high school graduate who police say rose from street dealer to multimillionaire in three years.

Oakland narcotics Officer Ken Scott, who headed the investigation, said that Reed "supplies all the other cocaine dealers" in the city, doing a minimum of 50 pounds a week.

The key to Reed's success "was that he could come up with the dope on a continuous basis. Most guys in this city can't do that," Scott said.

Reed owns several expensive cars and pieces of jewelry, including diamond-studded pendants and a Rolex watch police said is worth at least \$10,000.

Celebrating his 20th birthday last weekend, police said, Reed paid \$30,000 for 3,000 formally attired guests to attend a party in his honor at the Golden Gate Fields Turf Club in Albany.

The investigation by Oakland police, the Alameda County District Attorney's Office Major Narcotics Vendor Program and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration stemmed from informants' tips and "street talk" of Reed's alleged dealing, investigators said.

Scott said Reed expanded his operation after reputed drug kingpin Rudy Henderson was arrested in May. Reed and Henderson allegedly used to work together. Henderson is awaiting trial in federal court on narcotics charges.

Reed's organization is said to number at least 50, Scott said, including former associates of another Oakland drug kingpin, Felix Mitchell. Mitchell was killed two years ago in federal prison, where he was serving a



By Reginald Pearman/The Tribune

Police seized \$60,000 in cash and \$3 million worth of cocaine.

life term on narcotics convictions.

In the past, Reed has told police and other drug dealers that he is Mitchell's nephew. He reportedly began dealing in areas that used to be Mitchell's turf, police said.

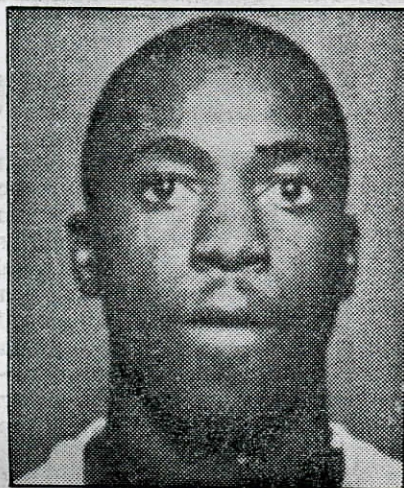
Scott said Reed's cocaine was "cooked up" at either the Van Buren apartment in a quiet neighborhood near Lake Merritt, which he rented in someone else's name for \$1,000 a month, or another apartment in East Oakland.

Customers rarely came to the apartments, police said, and the majority of deliveries were made by Reed's subordinates.

Scott said officers "were shocked to find (Reed) rocking his own stuff. Usually they have someone more experienced do it."

Reed is the fourth person suspected of being a major drug trafficker to be jailed this year.

In addition to Henderson, Oakland police in May arrested Emanuel Lacy on murder and drug charges. Lacy, who is accused of selling up to 200 kilograms of cocaine a week, is



Darryl Reed
Lavish lifestyle

awaiting a preliminary examination in Oakland Municipal Court.

In March, police arrested Anthony "Ant" Flowers, charging him with possession of more than 10 pounds of cocaine.

Police said those arrests had some impact on narcotics trafficking in Oakland and Reed's arrest "will slow it down even more for a while."

Drug crackdown cut slayings in Oa

By Harry Harris *Narcotics crime*
The Tribune

FRI JAN 20 1989

The total number of homicides in Oakland dropped slightly last year which was good news in itself.

But what was also encouraging to police was the decline in the number of drug-related slayings and increases in drug arrests and confiscations.

The final homicide tally for 1988 was 123, down six from 1987 and down 23 from the all-on are being looked at more closely.

Sims said there "may not be enough evidence" to charge a suspect with a murder or assault he is believed to have committed but there may be enough to get that person charged with a federal or state weapons violation "and get that person off the street."

He said some of those charged have been known to be "triggermen for a drug gang" and if they

time high of 146 in 1986.

Of the 123 slayings last year, 57 were considered drug-related, said Lt. Mike Sims, homicide unit commander.

That was 13 percent fewer than 1987 when 66 of the 129 recorded were classified as drug-related.

Several reasons for the decline are given by police and others outside law enforcement.

Homicide and narcotics investigators attribute the decline to from the \$1.2 million seized in 1987.

Sgt. Barney Rivera of the Special Duty Unit which made more than 2,200 drug arrests last year said he thinks one reason for the decline in violence is fewer turf wars where drug dealers fight it out for territory.

"There is more than enough turf," Rivera said. "Now they're running away from us more than other dealers."

One attorney who represents

new tactics and laws they have been using; community involvement in which residents tip police off to drug dealing; and increased numbers of arrests of drug offenders.

Everyone interviewed by The Tribune, from police to drug dealers, say the deaths of a number of men responsible for much of the violence and the jailing of others allegedly known to have ordered the killings have played a key role.

pected drug dealers such as Darryl Reed, Emanuel Lacy and Rudy Henderson, all of whom are facing trial on various charges.

Sims said although the declining numbers are encouraging police want even better ones and have no plans "to draw back on any programs in place."

He said police will vigorously and aggressively pursue "new programs to get violent people off the street."

One cocaine dealer in his mid-30s said since police and federal authorities "have knocked down so many shot callers" there is no one left to pay a hired killer.

"Nobody's going to take a contract from the jailhouse," the man said.

Sims said more police resources are being focused on drug crimes and violence.

One of those is a plan that went into effect a few months ago known as the "Beat Health

Oakland, police say

Project." That involves a team of officers who use city ordinances and state laws to close down suspected "crack houses" that attract suspected drug dealers and users.

So far more than two dozen such houses have been shut down.

"Rapid Deployment Forces" is another tactic that went into effect early last year.

Under that plan, whenever a drug-related act of violence oc-

curs teams of patrol officers and investigators respond immediately so that as much information as possible can be gathered from victims, witnesses and suspects.

That has led to increased numbers of potentially violent drug dealers being jailed.

Police are also taking advantage of tougher state and federal weapons laws, Sims said.

See SLAYINGS, Page C-2

One that is particularly effective is a relatively new federal law known as the Armed Career Criminal Act in which police have been working closely with federal agents who work for the Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms Bureau.

Under that act, if someone has three prior convictions for violent felonies or drug offenses where a 10-year sentence was given and is arrested for being in possession of a gun they can be sent to federal prison for a minimum of 15 years if convicted.

Sims said all cases involving the use of an assault-style weapon are being looked at more closely.

Sims said there "may not be enough evidence" to charge a suspect with a murder or assault he is believed to have committed but there may be enough to get that person charged with a federal or state weapons violation "and get that person off the street."

He said some of those charged have been known to be "triggermen for a drug gang" and if they

are in jail then the need for enforcement is off the street."

Sims also said increased numbers of drug arrests has had an impact.

Last year police arrested 7,033 people for possessing or selling cocaine or heroin, an increase of 28 percent over 1987.

Vice Squad Commander Lt. John Vomacka said the number of major offenders arrested — those who deal in ounces of heroin and pounds of cocaine — rose from 435 in 1987 to 551 last year.

He said police also seized 242 pounds of cocaine in 1988 compared to 88 pounds in 1987 and \$1.8 million in cash last year up from the \$1.2 million seized in 1987.

Sgt. Barney Rivera of the Special Duty Unit which made more than 2,200 drug arrests last year said he thinks one reason for the decline in violence is fewer turf wars where drug dealers fight it out for territory.

"There is more than enough turf," Rivera said. "Now they're running away from us more than other dealers."

One attorney who represents

several major drug dealers still maintains as he did last year that a small group of the city's biggest kingpins has issued an ultimatum to smaller dealers believed responsible for much of the carnage that if the violence does not cease their supply will.

The attorney, who asked that his name not be used, said major dealers still believe violence is "very bad for business because it brings a lot of pressure" from police.

The attorney cautioned that it could become "real interesting" if someone tries to fill the void created by the jailings last year of some of the city's larger suspected drug dealers such as Darryl Reed, Emanuel Lacy and Rudy Henderson, all of whom are facing trial on various charges.

Sims said although the declining numbers are encouraging police want even better ones and have no plans "to draw back on any programs in place."

He said police will vigorously and aggressively pursue "new programs to get violent people off the street."

Greed eventually did in savvy

SUN NOV 19 1989

By Michael Collier
The Tribune Narcotics crime

Oakland's exploding crack cocaine epidemic helped make Alvaro Becerra one of the richest men in America. Yet he shunned drug-infested neighborhoods like the plague.

Suave, articulate and a savvy businessman, Becerra much preferred the millionaire's comforts — sports cars, fancy jewelry, a maid and private schools for his children.

He made his home in suburban Miami, where his father sent him from Bogota at age 18 to get a college education.

And before he hit 30, Becerra had used his business degree — and years of practical experience — to join the top Colombian cocaine dealers in the United States.

He also became Oakland's biggest cocaine supplier in 1986 by linking up with Rudy Henderson, a street-tough bodybuilder who ruled the city's drug trade after the arrest of Felix Mitchell.

Authorities say the smooth-talking Becerra had a virtually endless cocaine supply from the Medellin Cartel, where he flew regularly to arrange more than \$50 million a year in deals with top-level street dealers in Los Angeles, New York, Dallas and Miami.

In the months before his arrest in June 1987, Becerra's 20-member ring, using a Los Angeles warehouse, smuggled, transported and sold up to 500 kilograms (1,100 pounds) of cocaine as often as once a week, federal agents say.

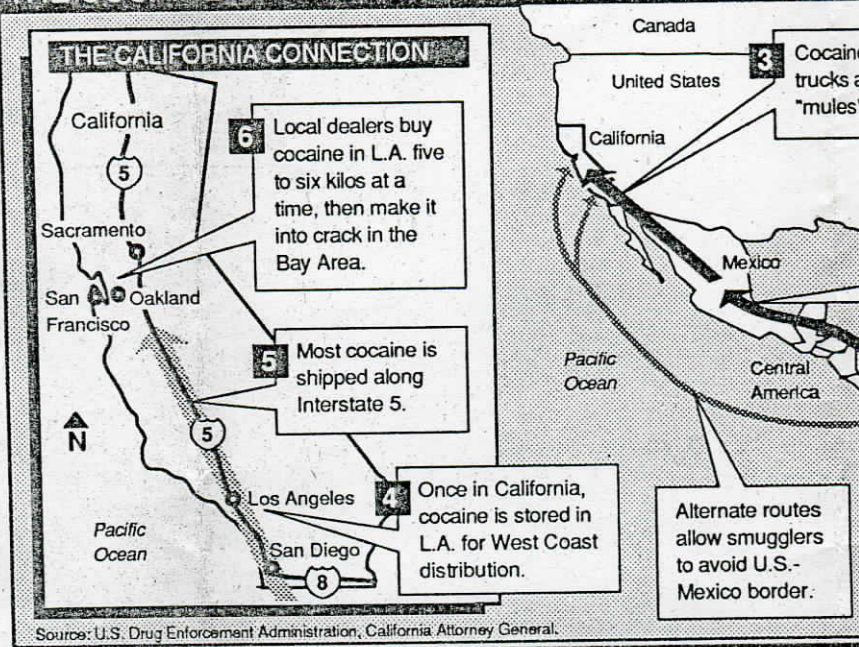
Nearly 400 kilos made it to Oakland dealers who bought cocaine from Henderson, court records show. One of those dealers was Darryl "Little D" Reed, a teenager who became the city's first crack king because he knew how to cook cocaine powder into rock form.

"There's no doubt Becerra was one of the top Colombians in the U.S.," said Joseph Lopez, a Drug Enforcement Administration special agent who helped track Becerra.

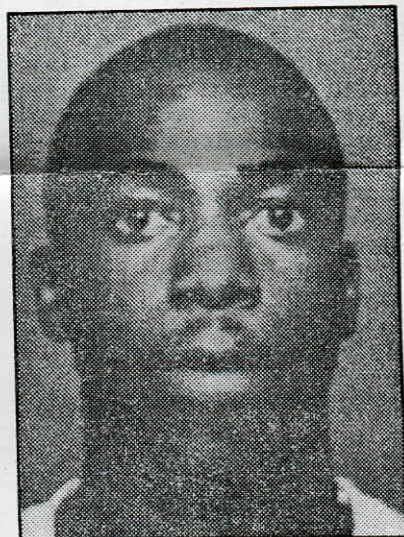
Becerra, Henderson and Reed were convicted of drug crimes earlier this year, with Becerra sentenced to 40 years in federal prison and Henderson 25 years. Reed will be sentenced next month.

But the story of Alvaro Becerra, detailed in federal court records, demonstrates the routine ties between Colombia's

THE COCAINE TRAIL: COLOMBIA TO THE BAY AREA



Rudy Henderson
Sentenced to 25 years



Darryl Reed
First crack 'king'

drug lords and Oakland's still-flourishing crack trade.

The case also shows how Becerra and his network — like an estimated 300 other Colombian drug rings in the United States — evaded authorities.

Becerra's Medellin bosses began using the land route between Mexico and California in mid-1986, just as crack was bursting on the scene, and he responded by moving a big part of his business to California, said DEA agent Lopez.

In a November 1986 meeting with Lopez, who posed as a drug client, Becerra, using the alias "Gabriel," boasted of regular trips to "the ranch" of Medellin lord Pablo Escobar, reputedly

the second-most powerful member of the cartel.

Asked if he could set up a 300-kilo deal, Becerra seemed taken aback and said he preferred to deal in 3,000-kilo shipments, which he claimed he could provide every eight days.

After the hourlong meeting with Lopez, a well-dressed Becerra picked up his briefcase and left the hotel room, not knowing the encounter had been secretly videotaped by the DEA.

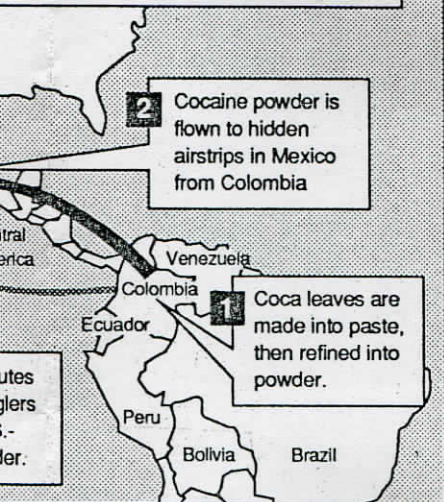
Becerra, one of five sons of a Bogota merchant, first came to the United States in 1977 on a student visa, according to court documents.

He graduated from the University of Miami and attended a

Heavy Colombian drug baron

Reed, Darryl

Cocaine is smuggled into U.S. by semi-trucks and cars or carried by human "mules" across the U.S.-Mexico border.



By Steve Kearsley / The Tribune

How Mexican 'trampoline' bounces cocaine into U.S.

The Colombian cocaine organizations have stunned authorities with the sheer volume of their product.

"When they can stash more than 20 tons in a warehouse in Los Angeles, it blows my mind," said state narcotics agent Jerry Smith, referring to the record seizure two months ago.

Drug authorities say Los Angeles has pulled even with Miami as the main port for cocaine in America, largely a response by Colombian traffickers to law enforcement crackdowns in Florida.

About 25 percent of the cocaine seized in the United States this year came through Los Angeles, said DEA official Bob Bender in San Francisco.

Bay Area cocaine dealers do their buying from Colombians in Los Angeles, often via couriers who drive the

goods up Interstate 5 in rented cars and trucks.

The wrapped kilos sold by Alvaro Becerra and other top-level Colombian dealers typically take a 3,500-mile journey from South American coca fields.

That odyssey begins with 500-kilo shipments packed into twin-engine airplanes that are flown to desert airstrips in northern Mexico. Pilots are paid about \$100,000 per load, a DEA source said.

From Mexico, the drugs are loaded into trucks or cars and ferried across the U.S. border by Mexicans who have for years smuggled heroin and marijuana into America.

Authorities call the popular route the "Mexican trampoline," in reference to the way Colombians "bounce" cocaine into the states.

— By Michael Collier



Alvaro Becerra
Used business degree

year of graduate business studies. He was sentenced to parole for smuggling counterfeit currency into the United States, and served time in prison on drug charges.

Becerra was paroled from federal prison in 1984 and deported to Colombia. But he returned to the United States illegally a month later — ready to hit the big time as a cocaine dealer.

Using several false names, Becerra set up a phony import-export business that he used as a front for his drug trade. He began contacting dozens of drug operatives he met or learned about in prison.

Becerra and Henderson ap-

parently met through a member of Becerra's ring, who realized Henderson needed a virtually limitless supply of cocaine to meet the bursting demand for crack in Oakland.

Between November 1986 and February 1987, Henderson received more than 200 kilograms of cocaine from Becerra, including one encounter in which Henderson was seen slipping a gym bag — presumably full of cash — to Becerra in the lobby of the Oakland Hyatt.

After that deal, Becerra was arrested at San Francisco International Airport for being an illegal resident of the United States. He posted \$100,000 bail — in cash — and returned to Miami. He failed to appear for future immigration hearings.

Meanwhile, Henderson fell \$1 million into debt to Becerra after one of the Oakland dealer's subordinates was arrested trying to sell 50 kilos to undercover drug agents.

Becerra cut off cocaine supplies to Henderson for three months, but resumed business when Henderson paid his debt to the Colombian in a series of meetings in a Gold's Gym near

Los Angeles.

In May 1987, Becerra paid \$7,261 in cash for a Mercury station wagon and had his couriers make three deliveries, totaling 150 kilos, from Los Angeles to Henderson's North Oakland home.

The deal done, Becerra paid \$20,000 cash for a Volkswagen van and took his wife vacationing in Las Vegas.

But the trip was cut short when Becerra read a newspaper account of Henderson's arrest and fled to Miami, where he rented a \$4,000-a-month luxury hideout until his arrest.

Authorities think Becerra could still be a free man if he had let his subordinates handle drug deliveries and money collection from Henderson, who for years had been the subject of police surveillance.

But Becerra apparently wanted money from Henderson faster than his employees were getting it, so he took matters into his own hands, not knowing his phone conversations with Henderson were being tapped.

"He went for the greed," said DEA agent Lopez. "That's what always gets them."



America's Newspapers

Paper: THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE
Title: Big Bay Area Crack Dealer Gets 35 Years
Date: January 30, 1990

Jan. 30, 1990

Reed, Darryl
San Francisco Chronicle

A 21-year-old man whom authorities called one of Oakland's biggest crack dealers was sentenced to 35 years in prison yesterday on federal drug charges.

Darryl (Little D) Reed sat silently in a federal courtroom in San Francisco as he listened to Judge D. Lowell Jensen issue the prison sentence and fine him \$50,000 for his convictions on three counts of possessing and manufacturing 20 kilograms of crack and powder cocaine.

In handing down the sentence, Jensen called Reed a "major trafficker in Oakland" who ran an extensive crack ring on the streets. "It's hard to calculate the amount of damage to the community," the judge said.

Having reaped the financial benefits of the profession he has chosen, Jensen concluded, Reed must now pay the cost. "The cost here is the forfeit of his adult life."

During the lengthy hearing, there was an undercurrent of tension and hostility in the courtroom, which was filled with local and federal drug agents on one side of the aisle and Reed's family and friends on the other.

After the sentence was read, a few women in the hallway broke into tears, and some of Reed's friends began yelling at the drug agents.

Prosecutor Robert Dondero was clearly pleased with the sentence, calling Reed a "very significant person in the city of Oakland."

Upon hearing Jensen's sentence, Reed's attorney immediately announced that he will appeal the 35-year prison term.

"It's just a horrendous sentence," said Santa Monica lawyer Roger Rosen. "Basically, his life has been taken away," he said, noting that the new federal sentencing laws only allow 54 days of good time off for each year served.

Reed faced a sentence of from 30 years to life in prison after a jury in September found him guilty of three counts of possessing and manufacturing 13 kilograms of crack cocaine and possessing seven kilograms of cocaine - worth an estimated total of about \$3 million.

He was indicted by a federal grand jury in December 1988 after Oakland police raided his Lake Merritt apartment, where they found him cooking crack cocaine in the kitchen.

Police also discovered several packages of cocaine, a handgun and almost \$60,000 in cash.

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Author: Harriet Chiang, Chronicle Staff Writer
Section: NEWS
Page: B6
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Authorities arrest 9, put 'crimp' in gangs

By Harry Harris
and Paul Grabowicz
Tribune staff writers

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A major Eastbay heroin and cocaine ring involved in a murderous war with rival drug gangs has been broken up by federal and local law enforcement agencies with the arrest of nine people and the seizure of batches of narcotics and weapons, authorities said yesterday.

About 400 federal agents and local police officers served arrest and search warrants on drug-ring members at nearly 20 locations yesterday in Oakland, Berkeley, Richmond, Castro Valley, San Ramon, Fairfield and Pacifica.

"I think it's a landmark day for the community of Oakland and the entire Eastbay (by putting) a crimp in the violence caused by drug wars," Bud Covert, assistant special agent in charge of the FBI's San Francisco office, said at a news conference announcing the arrests.

The Eastbay gang, headed by Timothy "Black" Bluitt, 26, of Fairfield, is an offshoot of Oakland's notorious "Mob" drug ring once run by slain narcotics king Felix Mitchell, authorities said. Mitchell was convicted on drug charges in

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1985 and was murdered in prison the following year.

Bluitt's ring and rival gangs run by alleged Oakland drug lords Anthony Flowers and Emanuel Lacy have been involved in vicious turf battles in the last year that have resulted in dozens of shootings in Oakland, according to court records and police. More than a half-dozen people have been killed in the war, including two of Bluitt's top lieutenants.

"In terms of territory, control, muscle and actual violence committed, Bluitt was No. 1," Oakland Vice Squad Lt. John Vomacka said.

Bluitt's operation was responsible for distributing at least 500 grams of heroin and five kilograms of cocaine — worth more than \$1 million — in the last month alone, according to a federal complaint filed yesterday against Bluitt and 13 of his associates.

"These individuals have been ... obtaining drugs in Southern California and distributing them in the Bay Area," said Matthew Pavone, chief of the U.S. Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, which headed the two-year-long investigation into the ring.

The probe included wiretaps, hundreds of hours of surveillance and use of several informants, according to court records.

Pavone said authorities decided to bring the case to a close when they received information that members of Bluitt's ring were planning to murder rival drug dealers.

"We received evidence of planning of drive-by shootings and other acts of violence and we wanted to take this down and prevent the violence," Pavone said.

In some cases, authorities warned members of other Oakland gangs that Bluitt had targeted them for assassination, according to federal court documents.

Pavone said the people in Bluitt's ring also were tied to other Oakland gangs run by deposed drug kingpins Rudy Henderson and Darryl Reed. Both of them are now in jail, although Reed allegedly helped coordinate Bluitt's efforts by phone from his prison, according to court records.

Bluitt recently had grown annoyed with Reed's attempts to direct the drug operation, sources said. He also was concerned about losing "respect" because of his inability to supply top-quality drugs and his failure to retaliate against rival gangs who were picking off his top people, according to federal court documents and police.

The first arrests in the case occurred late Saturday when two Los Angeles men, Donnell Hatcher, 25, and Fred Merrick, 27, allegedly drove to an Emeryville hotel with a shipment of heroin for Bluitt's network, according to an FBI agent's affidavit filed in court.

Hatcher was arrested without incident, but Merrick attempted to flee in his car and was apprehended after a high-speed chase, according to the affidavit.

Two other alleged members of Bluitt's gang,

William Johnson, 24, of Oakland, and Vincent Burton, 27, of Castro Valley, fled in another car that later was found abandoned, the affidavit said.

Authorities subsequently recovered about a pound of heroin from the wheelwell of one of the cars, Pavone said.

Early yesterday morning about 400 police and federal agents, including several SWAT teams, fanned out in cities all over the Bay Area to serve 12 arrest warrants.

Besides Bluitt, who is on probation for shooting at his girlfriend, the others arrested yesterday were Rickey Geeter, 24, of Oakland; Teddy Bohannon, 35, of Oakland; Kenneth D. Jones, 23, of Richmond; Alphonso Hayden, 22, of Oakland; and Charles McKinney, 25, of Pacifica.

Geeter, alleged to be one of Bluitt's top enforcers, was paroled from San Quentin Prison last month after serving a term for assault. Earlier this year, murder charges were dismissed against him in connection with the slaying of a rival gang member.

Bohannon, whose street name is "Wheelchair," according to court records, is a paraplegic who was nearly killed in a drug-related shooting several years ago, police said.

Six other suspects named in the arrest warrants are still at large. Besides Johnson and Burton, they were identified as Mark Norman, 28, of Oakland; Eric Jackson, 26, of Oakland; Darryl Trotter, 30, of Oakland; and Kenneth Winters, 25, of Oakland.

Reed, Darryl

Winters was recently released from jail after murder charges against him were dropped in another case, police said.

Another man, Percy Campbell, 21, of Oakland, who was at one of the suspect's residences yesterday, also was taken into custody for possession of a firearm, authorities said.

Authorities served 19 search warrants on residences and businesses used by the suspects.

Pavone said they recovered "ounce amounts of cocaine and heroin scattered around" at the various addresses.

Agents confiscated eight guns, including some assault-type weapons, authorities said, and about \$1,000 in cash at Bluitt's house.

More search warrants are being obtained for storage lockers used by the suspects, Pavone said.

Agencies involved in the case include the FBI, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau, the Internal Revenue Service, the Oakland Police Department and the Alameda County Drug Task Force.

All those arrested except for Campbell were arraigned in U.S. District Court in San Francisco yesterday on a federal criminal complaint charging them each with one count of conspiring to distribute 500 grams of heroin and five kilograms of cocaine. If convicted, they each face a possible 10 years to life in prison without possibility of parole and a \$4 million fine.

Pavone said he expects to file additional charges against many of the suspects.